



**AN ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONTINUOUS  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE IN AYSAITA WOREDA  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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**Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to assess the attitude of teachers towards school based continuous professional development practice in Aysaita woreda. To conduct the study, descriptive survey was employed. The study was conducted in Arado, Ewket Chora, Simbile and Wanis complete primary schools in Afar regional state. There are 28 complete primary schools in the woreda. Of these, four primary schools were selected randomly since they have the same characteristics with in woreda. From sampled schools, all the 4 principals and 4 vice principals of the schools were selected as they are few in numbers and to get tangible information. In the selected schools there are 138 teachers of which 50 teachers (36%) were randomly selected proportional to each school size. In addition, 8 woreda CPD experts, all supervisors of the selected schools and 20 student council members were selected as a sample. The main instruments of data collection were questionnaire, interview and class room observation. The data were analyzed using percentage, mean and grand mean. The findings of the study revealed that the main factors that affected teachers' attitude towards school based continuous professional development practice were found to be the teachers benefit expectation from CPD, lack of awareness when new CPD manual is prepared, lack clarity by woreda education officers and frequency of overlapping of new philosophies of CPD with 1 to 5 networking which causes confusion for teachers. To minimize the problem teachers, have to be familiar with new finding in their area of specialization and needs creation of awareness through continuous training as they are learner throughout their career.*

*.Key words: CPD, Practices, Attitude*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 BACKGROUND**

Studies on the links between teacher learning and students' achievement are divided into two waves (AFT, 2005). The first wave, beginning in the 1960s, focused primarily on generic teaching skills. In the 1990s, the second wave of research delved deeper into student learning, focusing on students' reasoning and problem-solving potentials rather than only on the basic skills. This inter wave suggests that professional development can influence teachers' classroom practices significantly and lead to improved students' achievement when it focuses on how students learn a particular subject matter; instructional practices that are specifically related to the subject-matter and content.

Teacher's classroom practice and interaction at classroom level seem to have vital importance in learning improvement. The following idea confirms this point. "In all education systems, the performance of teachers is one of the handful of factors determining school effectiveness and learning outcomes for teachers' interaction with learners is the axis on which educational quality turns" (VSO, 2002). With the changing educational reforms new ways of practice, new ways of working and above all, different ways of instructional practice demand continuous improvement and updating of teachers. Adding to this, Craft (2000), states that, the current

change in instructional practice, demands new knowledge, new skills and increasing commitment to lifelong learning. Fullan (1993) states, the intended educational change at three levels: the teacher, the school and the community, emphasizing on the teacher's level. The change at teacher's level is the core as the expected outcome rests on teacher's activities, which is the closest level to learning that directly affects students' achievement. The quality of academic and professional development teachers had during pre and in-service training have direct bearing on their performance and on the achievement of students. Quality of teaching, which is the result of pre-service and in-service training of teachers, is the core determining element of students' achievement (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991). To improve the current status of teaching quality, teachers' professional development is hoped to provide with a way to directly apply what they learn to their teaching. It leads to better instruction and improved student learning when it is connected to the curriculum materials that teachers use, and the academic standards that guide their work, and the assessment and accountability measures that evaluate their success. In agreement with this, many researchers report that the more professional knowledge teachers have, the higher the level of student achievement, (Reimers, 2003). The present government of Ethiopia has placed great importance on quality education and recognizes it as an essential component for development program needs of the society. The recent policy to quality improvement focuses on the complex interaction that takes place in the teaching learning process as the primary level to improve quality of education (MoE, 2005).

As one of the government's top priorities education quality improvement was the top of other education issues. Therefore, within the framework of the Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) is launched as a twenty-year education sector plan with one of the main priorities, quality improvement at all levels of educational system after extensive study by Ministry of Education (ESDP III). Based on the recommendations and indicative action plan presented in the study report, a task force was established to produce the 'National Framework for the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) and it has been implemented since 2003. Consequently, a program of continuous professional development (CPD) is designed and is put into practice to enable teachers update themselves with new outlooks, approaches and policy directions. Though teachers' professional development was not new in Ethiopia there was no structured provision of CPD for teachers in schools until 2003. The TESO CPD of (2003) strategies aims to put that structure in place primarily in primary schools. Teachers' professional development is to be practiced at school or at cluster center with the trust that teachers will embrace the concept of lifelong learning for their own benefit and for the benefit of the pupils they teach and the communities in which they live at large.

In Ethiopia, since 2007 modular approach to CPD program was introduced on rigorous implementation in all primary schools. This program has two main parts: the two-year induction program for newly deployed teachers and the transitional professional development, for teachers who are already in the system as the opportunity for continuous learning and update with expanding knowledge and share experiences, ideas, and good practices with colleagues from own and other schools (MoE, 2005).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Though structured provision of CPD is new phenomenon in Ethiopia (MoE, 2005), and local research reports on CPD are scanty, there are few on the positive effect of CPD on different school matters like student-teacher relationship, sharing idea and experience among teachers, working in collaboration and the like. Amare, (2006) reported that CPD has laid fertile ground to build strong academic achievement. On the other hand, Gizaw (2006) for instance found that CPD has little effect on teachers' classroom practice, utilization of participatory approach of teaching, improved professional knowledge and skills. Similar observation made by Berry (2008) in a study commissioned by VSO Ethiopia, conducted in three regions namely, Tigray, Afar and Amhara regional states argue that although the policy is to upgrade all teachers to diploma level there is no difference in the teaching quality of certificate and diploma holders; the impact on classroom remains a challenge. Though very few of them focuses on teachers' perceptions about the program itself (CPD) most of them focus on its effect.

It was the findings of the above scholars and other people with similar views and our personal experience of teaching in primary schools that inspired us to look into the problem closely. In addition, being a teacher in the area inspired us to think of conducting this study. Hence the researchers decided to explore teachers' perceptions and practices of school based continuous professional development in some selected primary schools of Aysaita woreda in Afar regional state.

This study is expected to find out answers to the following basic research questions:

1. To what extent do teachers of Aysaita woreda primary schools practice continuous professional development program?
2. What are the challenges that obscure the effort of attaining school based continuous professional development practice in primary schools in Aysaita woreda?
3. What is attitude of teachers and school principals towards CPD in primary schools in Aysaita woreda?
4. What are the possible solutions for the prevailing challenges to ensure school based continuous professional development practice in primary schools of Aysaita woreda

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.4.1 General objective**

The general objective of the study is to assess the practices and attitudes of primary school teachers towards school based continuous professional development practice in Aysaita woreda primary schools

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

- To assess the practice of continuous professional development in Aysaita woreda primary schools
- To identify the challenges that hinder the effort of attaining school based continuous professional development practice in primary schools of Aysaita woreda
- To assess the attitude of teachers and school principals towards CPD in primary schools of Aysaita woreda
- To suggest possible solution for the prevailing challenges to ensure school based continuous professional development practice in primary education.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The new education and training policy of Ethiopia is highly concerned on quality of primary education. Even the expectation of parents from their primary level children during schooling time is to have a better mastery of the required knowledge and skill to make a living. However, the product is not always measured up to the expectation of parents and educational stakeholders. Therefore, improving quality of education is the concern of all stakeholders because quality of primary education is the concrete base of other level of education. Based on this the study has the following significance.

- It can create awareness to all teachers, principals and other stakeholders about the issue of school based continuous professional development of the woreda education management
- It enables the principals, supervisors and teachers to seek ways and means about the problem of quality of CPD program in their school
- It may serve as a basis for others who wish to study the problem in wider scope

## **1.6. Delimitation of the Study**

This study was delimited to the investigation of practices and attitudes of primary school teachers towards school based CPD in four primary schools of Aysaita woreda. It is also confined only with CPD activities which are provided at school level. Moreover, it is delimited to government primary schools for the sake of in depth analysis and currently CPD program is being practiced in government school only.

## **2. Research Design and Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

Descriptive surveys research design has been used to answer the formulated research questions. This design is selected because the research is targeting in explaining the existing role of educational leaders in promoting quality of education in the selected primary schools.

### **2.2 Source of Data**

Predominantly, this study was depended on primary sources i.e. teachers, principals and supervisor and educational expert from woreda education office.

### **2.3 Population, sample and sample Techniques**

The ultimate purpose of this study is to assess practices, challenges and primary school teachers' attitude towards school based continuous professional development in primary schools of Aysaita woreda. Thus, the population of the study is principals, teachers, supervisors, educational office leaders and students

There are 28 complete primary schools in the woreda of these four primary school were selected randomly since they have the same characteristics with in woreda. From sampled schools all the four principals and four vice principals of the schools were selected as they are few in numbers. In the selected schools there are 138 teachers of these 50 teachers (36%) were randomly selected in proportion from selected schools. In addition, 8 woreda experts and all supervisors of the selected schools were included in the sample.

### **2.4 Instrument of Data collection**

The researchers use questionnaires for all respondents and interview was used for education officials. These tools have vivid evidences that can help to conclude and state best solutions for enhancing continuous professional development in the study area.

### 2.5 Methods of Data Analysis

The data gathered through the above tools were analyzed quantitatively based on its nature. Quantitative analysis such as percentage and ranking were employed for the data gathered through questionnaires and qualitative for the data obtained from interview.

### 3. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

A total of 90 questions were distributed to respondents drawn from Aysaita Woreda education office experts, and from four complete primary schools of the woreda. Out of the sampled population 50 (55.56%) were teachers, 8 (8.89 %) were principals, 8(8.89 %) woreda an officers /experts/ and 4(4.44 %) were school supervisors. All of (90) the questionnaires were filled and returned.

Based on the collected data 78 % teachers, 75 % principals, 100 % of supervisors and woreda experts and 60 % of school community were males. Regarding the service years, the majority of teachers (44%) of the study groups worked for about 6-10 years in their current position, 50% of the principals had service of from 11-15years work experience. Whereas 75% woreda experts have greater than 20 years work experience. These indicated that persons in the higher post have extended length of work experience than the persons in lower post.

The data also reveal 50 % of principals 100% of supervisors and woreda education officials have university degree whereas; 68% of teachers and 50 % of principals were diploma holders This shows that 68% the teachers 50% of principals 100% of educational supervisions had fulfilled the minimum requirement of qualification for their current post. Thus, the education system of the woreda holds not less number of unqualified professionals (32% TTI holder teachers) and this negatively affect educational leaders' motivation to facilitate and support the activities of continuous professional development and it creates some challenges in assuring quality of education.

## Result and Discussion

### i. Status and Challenges of continuous professional development practice

No	Item	Teachers		Principals		Supervisor		Woreda offices experts	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	a/ yes	14	28%	2	25%	-		4	50
	b/ No	18	36%	3	37.5%	2	50%	2	25%
	c/ don't state	14	28%	3	37.5%	2	50%	2	25%
	Total	50	100%	8	100%	4	100%	8	100%
2	a) No CPD expert in the woreda who can train teachers	16	32 %	6	75%	3	75%	5	62.5%
	b) lack of knowledge Administrative body of the school about CPD	36	72%	4	50%	2	50%	4	50%
	c) inability of the chosen CPD trainers to put in place	45	90%	8	100%	4	100%	8	100%
	d) No CPD manual at school level	10	20%	3	37.5%	2	50%	2	25%
	e) lack of refreshment incentives	8	16%	4	50%	2	50%	3	37.5%
	f) lack of knowledge about the significance of CPD	30	60%	5	62.5 %	2	50%	2	25%
	g) No legal framework to motivate that can punish teachers if they don't take CPD training	50	100%	8	100%	4	100%	8	100%

As the table indicates that 36 % of teachers, 37.5% principals 50% supervisors 25% of woreda education official agreed on the fact that training on CPD were given. This shows that the majority of teachers, principals and experts at woreda level training was not given on CPD. Among the reasons indicated for which CPD training was not given are: lack of knowledge of administrative body of the school about CPD responded by 72 % of teachers 50% of principals 50% of supervisors and 50% woreda education officers; the inability of the chosen CPD trainers to put in place responded by 90% of teachers, 100% of principals, 100% of supervisor Moreover lack of regular CPD manual as a case that hinder CPD which is supported 20 % of teachers 37.5% principals, 50% supervisors and 25% woreda education officers. Lack of refreshment and incentives was supported by 16% of teachers ,50% principals ,50% supervisors and 37.5% woreda officers and lack of knowledge the significance of CPD has been chosen 60% teachers ,62.5 % of principals ,50% supervisors and 25 % woreda education officers from this the major finding is no legal framework that can punish teachers if they don't take CPD training, this idea has got a hand upper which is supported by 100% of all respondents. Based on the above responses, the current status of CPD and the role of educational leaders in promoting continuous professional development in the study area were poor.

ii. **Teachers' attitude towards CPD**

No	Item	Frequency of respondents teachers	
		No	%
1	Do you feel happy for being a teacher		
	a) yes	14	28
	b) no	36	72
	Total	50	100
2	If your answer is no what makes you unhappy		
	a) due to low status of the profession	18	36
	b) disparity of pay to the some education level	16	32
	c) Lake of proper performance evolution system	16	32
	Total	50	100
3	What initiate you to be a teacher?		
	a) Due to lack of interest towards the profession	12	24
	b) Lack of other alternative	19	38
	c) Other reasons	19	38
	Total	50	100
4	In your opinion if teachers get other job with the same salary how many of them will leave their profession?		
	a) Nobody will leave	12	24
	b) The majority will leave	28	56
	c) All of them will leave	10	20
	Total	50	100

The above table reveals attitude of teachers towards their profession. The majority (72%) indicated that they were not happy for being a teacher. Their key reasons were due to low status of the profession (36%) and disparity of pay for some education level in other organization in (32%). This response showed that the teacher is almost dissatisfied and what could be the expected out comes is obviously low quality educations which is being affected partially due to not taking continuous professional Development. Regarding item "3" their initiating factor to be teachers were due to lack other alternative (38%) the others 38% of were due to the interest of the profession and similarly 24% of the answered other reasons. Concerning item "4" the data reveals that the majority (56%) of teacher will leave their jobs if they get other job outside their profession. From these one can conclude that school suffers with total leaving of teachers if opportunities are opened for teachers.

**Major Findings:**

- In the study ,it was found 50% of the supervisors and 50% of principals were neither specialized nor taken any CPD training
- As the finding reveals 50% of the teachers 53% of the principals and 65% the supervisors agreed on the declined attitude towards CPD trainings. Incentives, regular training manuals, services and school pedagogical centers activities were not adequately available for providing necessary services in the study woreda.

- The overall rating concerning teachers' attitude towards CPD and their motivation were found negative due to low status of the profession, disparity of pay to some educational level comparing with other sectors and lack of proper performance evaluation system. Moreover, most of them were jointed into the profession without interest // backlog other alternatives
- Though teachers are taking some training about CPD, they do not implement accordingly.
- The study also showed that teachers have never received any orientation about the newly prepared CPD manual.
- The findings revealed that , woreda supervisor interest in enhancing CPD is found to be low by both principals and supervisors .The main reason what they mentioned were that 100% of the supervisors have not taken any initial CPD training and their levels of education were not better than the teachers and principals .Because of these reasons .They do not support teachers in academic aspect rather they focus on routine administrative / non instructional issues so that all the above mention reason declined due to lack of motivation of educational leaders to ensure the practiced of CPD .

## 5.2 Conclusions

From what has been discussed in the findings, attitude of teachers towards continuous professional development in primary education in Aysaita woreda has declined and the role of educational leaders in promoting continuous professional development came to be low due to the following reasons.

Teachers do not enter into the profession with interest and they would like to leave the profession if they got other opportunities .Among other factors low social status of the profession, disparity of pay, lack of proper performance and evaluation access in service training were affecting teachers motivation and an obstacles to enter with full interest .

Majority of the principals 65% and the supervisors 70% were not qualified for their position due to lack of training for their current position. Because of these reason teachers could not receive significant professional support and their main focus was on the routine administrative issues.

Woreda education office don't take that much responsibility to put in place CPD as integral part of school activity. CPD is coming in to overlap with the new idea of 1 to 5 networking and is also recent phenomena which it faces change resistance from experienced teachers.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusions on the study, the following recommendations are suggested,

- Up grading teachers' qualification through providing training in summer program as well as short term continuous professional development trainings.
- Reducing the outflow of qualified teachers through facilitating favorable working condition, providing opportunities for further education, improving economic conditions etc
- CPD practice is affected if teachers have no confidence in their subject matter mastery. As teachers are always students in their life, they have to be familiar with new finding in their area of specialization. In this respect, continuous training is paramount
- Woreda education office should also formulate mechanisms of monitoring & evaluating the progress of the CPD practice, as well as to obtain realistic feed back of the performance.

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